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# INTEGRITY



SEX AND  
THE SINGLE WOMAN

Single Women

MARRIED AND SINGLE

SINGLE MEN—AFRAID TO MARRY?

# **INTEGRITY, September 1954, Vol. 8, No. 12**

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## *Editorial*

WE admit frankly that this single women issue is one of the most troublesome we've ever put out. It is only too easy to give general solutions to the question of what unwillingly-single women should do with their lives, but it is extremely difficult (and practically impossible in a magazine) to give personal solutions; yet it is a very personal answer that each single woman desires. There is the temptation then to take the easy way out and offer the convent or the secular institute as the anchor for all the Catholic single women floating around. Needless to say though, no vocation should be chosen—unconsciously or not—as an outlet, an escape. When it is, not only does the work itself suffer but the person's unhappiness only increases. Yet it is true that the single woman should not be left to drift, to her own great misery and to the detriment of the Church and society to which she should be making a definite contribution. That is why she has a need for individual guidance. Spiritual direction to help her find God's will—yes; but she achieves her supernatural destiny through an earthly vocation, and the unhappy single woman may need psychological help as well.

For instance she may blame her hapless state on the eight million bachelors over thirty. Or she may comfort herself that she wouldn't stoop to the husbands her married friends were willing to accept, or to embrace the tactics they employed in husband hunting. (This latter rationalization was advocated in a Catholic paper as advice to single women.) But by doing so she is building herself defenses that are not going to weather the storms and adversities of the single life. The same reasons that may have kept her from getting married—such as overdependence on her parents, fear of men, emotional immaturity—are going to stand in her way if she tries to devote herself to charitable or apostolic work. She needs help therefore to grow toward emotional maturity, for only as a mature woman will she be able to fulfill her personal vocation—whether it be to physical or to spiritual motherhood.

THE EDITOR

# *Sex and the Single Woman*

by ANNE RILEY

*A single woman points out the difficulties of leading a chaste life in today's world.*

No one minimizes the heroism of Catholic married couples who "accept all the children the Lord sends them" in these times of crisis and uncertainty. But at least the married couples have an accepted vocation, and are given moral support by their Catholic friends and neighbors, and by the spokesmen of their Church.

The heroic aspects of the day-to-day life of the Catholic single woman in the world are neither adequately recognized nor comprehended by our priests and hierarchy. What follows is a small attempt to clarify some of these aspects.

**Let's face it.** We are living in a time when virginity is no longer prized. The reasonably attractive woman who meets men in her daily work, is bound to encounter situations which try her soul—and her body—in a special way. I asked a very personable unmarried woman, now doing a rather outstanding work for the Catholic Church here and abroad, what her biggest problem as a single woman was. I thought she might answer that it was the problem of turning aside the rather obvious "plays" that were directed her way. On the contrary, her first problem originated with clergy and hierarchy she met in the course of her work—who asked with monotonous regularity, "Why aren't you married?" As she has decided not to marry (after considering offers that came her way) and as she feels she is doing her best to make some little contribution to Church and society in her work, she feels depressed every time the inevitable question is presented to her—whether seriously, or half in jest, or in wonderment that a woman could possibly have chosen single blessedness—or cursedness—of her own free will.

"It is bad enough" she said, "to have the world against me—

considering as it does virginity in a normal woman an aberration. We single women need moral support from our Church.

"It is really tough to have to meet this question from priests on several continents. As soon as they see I am not a member of any group of 'dedicated women,' or am not wearing a Lay Apostolate badge, I have to start justifying myself, my choice, my status, my vocation, if I can call it that."

The writer agrees with her thoroughly, since exactly the same question has been put her. However, from one point of view, the question is a form of compliment, since it implies that the questioner considers the lady in question marriageable material—and had at some point or other turned down eligible males.

St. Paul treats as a gift the fact that a person has remained single and would have the single person "free from care." The single women of our time are much like the women spoken of by St. Paul, who lived in their homes doing good in the world. But this nagging question also serves as a care and distraction to a woman trying to serve God and to find peace in His will—whether His will includes marriage or not.

There is a further implication in the question that any marriage is better for a woman than the unmarried state in the world. The very fact that so many women choose of their own free will to refuse offers of marriage which would involve too many compromises, is proof that they do not consider any marriage better than no marriage. That such a choice is possible indicates the tremendous revolution in the "status of women" in the Western world in the past few generations.

The above considerations apply more to the college-bred Catholic woman, who finds a certain measure of satisfaction in her work, in cultural or creative activities, and in whatever service she is able to give to God and His Church.

**Reluctant virgins.** But the problems of the single Catholic woman fall most heavily on the more representative girls who had hoped for marriage—and who are the unwilling virgins. Neither in the Catholic home, nor in the Catholic high school or college, does there seem to be any preparation for the actuality of today's living.

In most good Catholic homes, and possibly more particularly in Catholic homes where an Irish background predominates, the acceptance of sex as a reality in life and in the individual person-

ality, is far from an actuality. The education that many of us received was completely Victorian, in school and at home! In such circumstances it is not unusual that sexual awareness comes later than it should—and when it comes it is accompanied by feelings of guilt.

The Catholic girl who marries, finds, as I said before, that her vocation is a blessed one in the eyes of the Church. The unmarried girl, often catapulted into a world where sex is discussed casually, and where the attentions of the men around her, married or unmarried, are often tests to see how far she will allow them to go, does not receive the religious props she so desperately needs.

The unmarried girl, without work which absorbs her, with a deep longing for affection and companionship, may enter innocently into a friendship with a married man, or a man separated from his family. Catholic girls will defend these friendships, explaining that "they are not really dates, and anyway we won't go too far." There must be the deepest compassion for these girls, so frustrated in their normal desires, so desolate in their loneliness, so unable to find satisfaction in an intense spiritual life, or in creative work. Very often such a friendship does go on innocently for several years. We all know of long-term, so-called "sinless" friendships—particularly in our big cities, where one's actions are not censured by close neighbors. And often the girl will go regularly to the Sacraments, feeling secure in her power to resist "going too far." But we have known cases where the most natural result came to this sort of friendship—and it drifted into an affair, or into a single act of love which terminated the friendship in bitterness, and in psychic unrest for the Catholic girl.

The Catholic girl who goes into the world so pitifully prepared with her semi-Victorian training, and who finds her much prized "purity" so lightly esteemed, has almost no place to go for advice and moral reassurance. She probably just keeps repeating in her confessions that she has "bad thoughts," and is cautioned to have special devotion to the Virgin.

The writer of this article found herself thus unprepared in a secular college, in an "advanced group" of girls who aspired to be writers, actresses and stage technicians. One rather gifted girl boasted of having slept with eighteen men. It was out of the question to discuss such matters at home with a holy mother or with sisters in Catholic schools. After a while, the hold of the

Church became loose, and the excitement of new friends and new ideas took hold. At this time, under providence, the writer received very special aid in understanding sex and its connotations from the father of a friend of hers—a Jewish doctor who was the author of a book on sex training for women. He caught her reading his book one day while she was waiting for her classmate, and took her aside.

He took it on himself to explain many things—but especially one thing—no girl should have any sexual experience before marriage. He stressed particularly that once a girl had had one sexual experience, she has no longer the same mastery of herself, of her emotions. He made the point that most girls who had succumbed to one sexual experience, and who came from a good home which would condemn such experience, were deeply sorry afterwards, for physical, if not spiritual reasons. He stayed on the natural level in his arguments, and gave the kind of scientific arguments that a junior in a secular college would relish. I suppose he had arrived at the right "pitch" in talking to his daughter, who had no religion. He convinced us both, and at the same time put virginity and sexual awareness under the calm light of day and actuality.

**The need for counselling.** Some such talks, including not only physiological facts but emotional and psychological factors as well, should be a part of Catholic high school and college curricula. A deficient education in Christian sexual attitudes, that fails to prepare girls adequately for their roles as nuns or as wives and mothers, has especially tragic results in failing to prepare for life those girls who find themselves remaining virgins in the world. Such talks then would be valuable pending the time that a more realistic assessment of our society and its sexual mores will bring some changes to our Catholic academic structure.

It can be confessed that Catholic college education seems to train girls to be so submissive in going along with "the accepted thing" in general that it is a hard thing to expect them to be "hold-outs" in the matter of personal behavior once they are "out in the world." They are not prepared for the role of protest against society. Is it any wonder that there are so many cases of spiritual maladjustment among our unmarried Catholic school graduates? There is real danger of emotional explosion in the situation of the girl brought up and surrounded by vague notions

of purity, coming into the actuality of our day-to-day life where sex is not only a normal component, but a much exploited component.

But there are also many Catholic girls who meet the same difficulties without the benefit of any Catholic education outside the home. In these cases pastoral counselling, so loudly called for in many areas, is probably the only answer. New publications for the parish priest are desperately needed, and perhaps this issue of a lay magazine may open up some new needs and possibilities. It is necessary for the priest not only to know yesterday and the day before yesterday, but today, so that he can help create tomorrow. A noted woman anthropologist has pointed out that virginity, without damage to the total human personality, is possible for one who grows up in a Catholic society. But, as the larger society of our day presents so many dangers to chastity as well as to other Christian virtues, it is more than ever necessary for the parish to become a real community, a real society of mutual help.

Some will ask where these over-protected girls are keeping themselves. What about the movies, advertisements and other sex-exploiting media that surround them? The fact is that they come from almost every lower and middle income Catholic home—even in the biggest cities where people are supposed to be more sophisticated than in the smaller towns.

The impersonal presentation of sex in movies or ads may have little effect on the unawakened female. Even Dr. Kinsey admits that this is true, since his questions elicited that women are not aroused, as men are, by pictures and by various types of stimulation. Direct stimulation is what arouses a woman, and that is what she runs into in the world of business, and professional life generally.

Personable males, especially when repulsed, become more and more anxious "to show her what life is." Offers of a weekend of fun are casually and then insistently presented to a woman obviously unattached. Sometimes she accepts attentions and companionship in the hope that it will lead to marriage, and receives instead an invitation to spend a vacation together in some far-away, lovely spot. Often it is the girl over thirty who is plagued most by these advances. When she explains that she is interested in marriage or nothing she is told, "You can't be that naive!"

**Today and yesterday.** Many churchmen deplore the free-

dom that women have today because it puts them in such situations dangerous to their purity. They stress that the true role of every woman is motherhood, either physical motherhood, or spiritual, as with religious sisters or maiden aunts. It would be better for unmarried women, they feel, to stay closer to the home and tie themselves to some other woman's family. In the Victorian era this, of course, was the system, and it was in this era that the harsh neurotic spinster became a stock figure—in life as well as in novels and plays.

A woman fulfills herself in being wife and mother as in no other way. But she is first a person, and the poor maiden aunt who served as mother to other people's children, was without status or respect as a person. In those days, too, women's sex feelings, far from being discussed, were not even admitted. Out of the lack of reality, there had to come neurosis for the woman not only denied sex, but denied the honest path of admitting its potential role in her life. And of course neurosis did come, mitigated somewhat by the fact that the society of the time supported the maiden aunt in her neurosis, while refusing her the natural personality outlets of work and independence. Instead of becoming more gentle and motherly, the spinster of the last century seemed to become more sharp-tongued and angular as she approached the end of her life.

It was in this setting that Freud thundered like a prophet, "Men know they have souls. It is my task to teach them that they also have instincts." The strength of our instincts, which no one would want to deny—has certainly been oversold to our secular society.

In my opinion, most unmarried women of today have only too many outlets for their maternal instincts. Outlets are forced on them by the married members of the family—such outlets as mothering the aged members of the family, and mothering nieces, nephews, and godchildren through illnesses, through school, etc. Many of them, after a steady dose of mothering successive generations, would welcome a little surcease, and maybe enjoy a little mothering themselves.

And yet, I heard a bishop the other day say serenely: "I don't consider business women as the female sex any more. They are already men!" He was referring to Catholic unmarried business women.

Thus it seems that for a virgin in the world there is insufficient compassionate understanding of her lot on the part of the Church. There is such a lack of comprehension of the realities that she is not prepared to face either the realities within her own nature, nor those that may well surround her in her professional and even social life.

Somewhere along the line she should be apprised of the ever-deepening chasm between the Church's attitude on sex and that of our society, so moved by the tag-ends of Freud which no longer have much relevance. There should be a willingness to analyze the specifics of today's situation—not merely to sum it up as a Babylon.

**Accepting her sex.** Most of all virgins in the world should be encouraged to accept themselves and their sex in all its reality. Grace, as we know, builds on nature, and the unmarried girl, the unwilling virgin, must face her own nature so that she will not be fighting the wrong spiritual battle within herself.

Physically and psychologically the society of today brings more pressure to let down the bars of sex. To withhold herself from sexual activity, to keep her intentions pure, is a heroic struggle. The unmarried girl must realize that there is a wearing down process, and she must not flagellate herself if she feels herself weak and liable to fall. Far better to know her own weakness than to trust in a false strength that can lead her into sin.

Very often virginity becomes harder as she grows older. For instance, the sexual instinct may be much stronger in a woman of thirty than in a girl of eighteen. She must accept this and realize that it is a natural phenomenon and not evidence of a decline in her spiritual life. As she grows older she may begin to regret the valid decisions that led her to refuse marriage with most unsuitable partners. Or if, as in many cases, she has refused suitable offers of marriage—or has not married because of family pressure or personal maladjustment—her bitterness tends to increase as the years go on.

Her growth in holiness depends on her having the humility to accept herself as she is, and as she has been at different periods in her life, with all her mistakes and personal failings. Recognizing her deficiencies she must throw herself on the mercy of God to lead her out of each season of her life. The law of God that binds unwilling virgins to perfect chastity is a hard law indeed,

but she must learn to be delighted with this law of God, as was St. Paul, so as to fight against that other law that is in the members of the natural man—and woman.

**Recompense.** And there are consolations to her—even in the desolation of loneliness that so often afflicts a woman with neither husband nor children—a woman who, no matter what worldly success she may achieve, is still so deprived that she can cry with the psalmist: "I am alone and poor." In a time of world crisis like our own, she can be more detached from the threatening destruction, the overhanging catastrophe. She has been forced in a rather visible way to be "a pilgrim and stranger on the earth"—to live in the expectation of a "heavenly country." By having no husband she can more easily care for the things of God.

Let her accept herself and her lot with good grace, and correspond with the good grace from above to reach that heavenly country.

For without that grace virginity in the world is not only impossible, but fruitless; while with that grace Catholic virgins in the world can bring to society that fruitful virginity which only the Church can and should nurture and support.

#### PETIT CHANSON en francais

Je suis la femme de culture,  
Je suis a sort of vulture.  
J'aime la plus bonne taste.  
Gee, ain't I a waste.  
Pauvre petit vulture.  
Toujours apres culture.

NIALL BRENNAN



# *Married and Single*

*by DOROTHY DOHEN*

*Pointing out some of the difficulties that keep married and single people from co-operating in the lay apostolate.*

Some time ago I was talking with the mother of a large family. She and her husband had been active in the Christian Family Movement for a number of years but had dropped out of it. They had, however, maintained their interest in the family apostolate and as we talked the wife explained to me why they had dropped their official connection with the movement. "Neil was out organizing new sections almost every night. We both gave a lot of talks and were always out to meetings. Finally it got too much and we realized we were neglecting our own family."

A single girl remarked to me the other day: "They talk about single women being full of self-pity. Well, no wonder; you don't see your married friends any more and all you associate with are other single women. You're called on by married people in an emergency but socially you're not included."

We heard that a sick mother with five children was in desperate need of help. We tried to get someone in to take care of the children, but in vain. No woman free to do it.

**Made for each other.** These are some of the incidents which started me thinking about the need single and married people have for one another. In INTEGRITY's issue on Co-operation the editorial states that "In many of our large cities on various days of the week, upwards of a thousand people attend some novena service or other. . . . Most of the needs of these thousand people for which they make petition are needs that could be satisfied *by one another*. If every one of the thousand practiced the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, most of the petitions would be granted. In other words, their prayers have already been answered in the sense that God has corporately

endowed them with what they corporately need, but for lack of social charity and social justice His providence for them as individuals is frustrated."

In no way does this contention show itself to be more true than in the relationship between married people and single women. There has been a lot written on the single woman problem, quite a bit of talk among people interested in the family apostolate about the responsibility of the single woman to the family, but I regret to say that I for one feel there has been scarcely anything said about the responsibility of the *family* to the *single woman*. I say this in no spirit of "an eye for an eye" or "tit for tat," but for the simple fact that charity among Christians implies mutual responsibilities and mutual services. "Bearing one another's burdens" seems to mean not that one person—or one particular group in the community—is always on the receiving end, while the other is always on the giving end, but that there is a constant flow of love in action—that all people have something to give and something to be given. They have interlocking needs and interlocking talents. The single people can give to the married, but conversely married people are to give to the single ones.

**The need for community.** One of the most intense sufferings of single women is loneliness. G. B. Stern, the English novelist, in the story of her conversion puts this feeling very well when she says that it is the gnawing awareness of "not being first with anybody." This condition will persist, of course, even if the single woman has devoted relatives and friends and is part of a social group. But it is intensified for those single women who have few good friends and who have no sense of belonging to a community, no feeling of having a place in society. The need for community is fundamental to human beings; we are social by nature. It is normal for us to be part of a community: to live and work and pray and play with others. To such a degree is this true that it has been said that the man who lives as a hermit must be either a beast or an angel.

It may be argued that the Christian single woman should be grounded in a solid spirituality that would make her dependent on God alone and thus independent of the need for community life. The fact is that she needs to live and work with other people in order to practice the active virtues and to grow in fraternal charity. It is through other people that she will manifest her

love of God, and through them God will manifest His love of her. Paradoxically it is through the normal give-and-take of the human community, through the full participation of the joys and graces of the Christian community, that she will become mature and achieve a healthy independence. Probably as she grows in holiness and learns to live for God alone (which is her aim as well as every other Christian's) her dependence on the community will be less obvious; but for that reason the community will need her all the more. But it is skipping steps to expect single women to attain to complete detachment overnight. It is quite normal that they should need community life; quite natural that they should long for the love and understanding of other people. Consequently, it is a particularly irritating smugness on the part of Christian married people if—while they themselves are surrounded by human affection—they expect single women to be content living directly for God alone.

**Why is community difficult?** One of the obvious effects of the breakdown of community is the separation of people according to age groups and marital status. In the community of a former era, where several generations oftentimes lived together under one roof and where an unmarried aunt or cousin lived with a family, this situation did not exist to the extent it does today. Not that it isn't perfectly normal that people of the same age and marital status who share the same interests gravitate toward one another. At most social affairs of married groups, for instance, the men are off at one end of the room and the wives are grouped together at the other end. But no normal man (unless he's got a religious vocation) would want to live in an exclusively male community, and obviously no woman wants to exist in a completely feminine society!

And yet in a way that is what is happening to single women today. Needless to say, we are not holding up as the solution to their problem an impossible return to a former pattern of life (which had aspects anyway that were far from ideal). However, the point is: if there is to be a revival of the idea of community it should include single women.

One of the barriers to both conversation and community among single and married people is the mutual barrenness of their intellectual, spiritual and cultural lives. Too often they have no interests outside their own narrow experiences. This is

true, of course, even of some husbands and wives. Television is the boon which makes communication—impossible anyway—completely unnecessary. At the end of their separate days TV fills the gap between supper and going to bed.

Among women whose interests are exceedingly limited, often to the things that concern only themselves, this situation also exists. The married woman gets bored with her single friend who can discuss nothing except "today in the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company," and the latter is disgusted after an hour of hearing nothing except how hard Junior is teething. There's no common interest, no common meeting ground. Of course, it still holds true that those Christians who lack the intellectual and cultural background to transcend the personal can still "seek not so much to be understood as to understand." Junior's teeth are important. The girl's frustrations at her office are worthy of her married friend's understanding attention. The give-and-take of charity can make up (to a certain extent at least) for the lack of an educational background that would have given both women sufficient sustained interest in literature, music, community affairs and the world around them, that they'd still have things in common even though one has married and the other has not.

We don't pretend that the integration of single women into normal social life would be at all easy. The married woman has to give primary consideration to her husband; she can't bore him with a lot of her single friends. Besides, it isn't so much a matter of the actions of particular couples or families, but of the whole pressure of society which says people must be paired off in *twos*; you don't have a mixed gathering with single women unless you have an equal number of single men.

Sometimes women who are the most domestic and would make excellent wives and mothers, but who are also very shy, suffer because they don't meet men in a family setting. They often can't be themselves on a rare date because they aren't "at home" enough with men.

In all justice we should note that in various apostolic groups girls and fellows have associated together in a normal way, and married and single people have mixed socially—their common interest in the apostolate having transcended the divisions of sex and status. But there should be more of this, and it seems that the initiative must come from the married people.

There are difficulties we can't pretend to overlook. A priest was telling me of a French effort at Christian community that ran aground because the men found the conversation of the single women—who had the leisure to go to the theatre and keep up their interest in books and politics—very interesting. The wives became jealous—even though, as Father hastened to add, there had been no transgression of propriety.

**Family service apostolate.** Single women are advised rightly to help parents with their children. Such help ranges from occasional baby-sitting to a full-time family service apostolate. The latter is increasingly viewed as a necessity by those concerned with the Christian family. Mothers need help in sickness, when there is a new baby, or in some emergency. Young women who can spend a few weeks in the family until conditions are back to normal are an invaluable help. But whether the single woman gives herself full-time to family service or is a relative free to help out only for a few hours occasionally, there are some facts that she must understand.

First, and most important, she must realize she goes into the home to *accept*, not to *change*. She goes to accept the family pattern as it is in this particular family. She must conform to it, not expect the family to conform to her. Well-meaning efforts at family service have failed through overlooking this fact. Perhaps it would be good, as a married woman suggested, if a widow founded a family service, for she would understand that the family has to be run in consideration of the husband's job and hours and wishes, and in view of the children's needs. The single woman may have in mind an ideal schedule for a family, but usually she will create havoc if she tries to impose it. Obviously it is presumptuous of her to think she can go into a home and within twenty-four hours change long-established patterns. Perhaps her ideas *are* better; but perhaps too they have never been tested in the rough and tumble of family life. After she really understands a situation she may make suggestions, but they must never, *never* be forced on a family. This is particularly the case with a family to whom the single woman is donating her services. It is tactless as well as a breach of charity to take advantage of the situation to enforce all sorts of changes.

The apostolate to the family should be concerned with *service*, not with *reform*. Undoubtedly the mother's helper will

have an apostolic influence but it will be in proportion to her loving service. If, on the contrary, her immediate aim is influence, she will end up irritating. Irritating, first of all, the husband who finds it bad enough to be reformed by a wife, let alone a single woman; irritating the wife who resents having to listen to a sermon on the liturgy when she knows there are diapers to be washed. The single woman, if she keeps to her purported task of cooking, cleaning, minding the children, and does it all competently and carefully, will bring the peace of Christ to the family to a far greater degree than if she were to sermonize.

**Faulty spirituality.** The girl engaged in family service needs constant spiritual sustenance, but her religious exercises should not disrupt the family. Daily Mass is a fine thing, but the woman who comes in to do some temporary mothering may have to give it up—just as the real mother of the family must make a similar sacrifice if she can't go off and leave the children. Family life is not convent life. The single woman who develops her spirituality in accord with her vocation (in this case family service) will not only have a greater apostolic influence, but will not be under a severe psychological strain. Giving devoted attention to all the multitudinous needs of a family moment by moment is in itself an excellent means of self-discipline and preparation for prayer.

This is not to imply that the person doing family service shouldn't have time for formal prayer. It might be a good idea—if she goes from family to family every couple of weeks—to take a few days off in between for spiritual re-fueling. That way she would have contact with God and receive the love she needs if she is to give wholehearted service to her charges.

There is a mistaken notion that family service can be done only by those who intend to remain "dedicatedly single." A girl who wants to marry can do family service; she need not adapt a semi-conventional group life nor relinquish her normal social activities. In fact, the mother of a large family, who has had different girls help her at various times, told me that the most satisfactory in every way was a girl who lived with them for about a year. She was active in the Catholic Action group in the parish, was very popular with the local youth and had a full social life. She left the family to get married. Her apostolic influence was less direct than that of other mother's helpers they had had, but it was

more lasting. I write this in detail because I consider family service of utmost importance to Christian family life, and I regret the misconceptions which have prevented girls from doing it, as well as discouraged families who have had experience with "reforming" women.

However, whether the single woman is occasional baby-sitter or full-time worker, she must have the humility to serve when she's needed. Despairing parents see Aunt Primadonna dangle Baby on her knee when he should be sleeping, but when they need an evening out and ask Aunt Primadonna to mind him, she resents being asked. "If I can do it voluntarily, all right, but I'm not going to be told when you want me." Such capricious service is as maddening as it is useless.

The worst infliction on the family, however, is the self-appointed martyr—the single relative who has decided that she has the mission to immolate herself on the domestic altar of sacrifice, and, of course, never lets the family forget the fact. Her "martyrdom" usually proceeds from a deep-seated need in her own personality rather than from any demands made upon her. It is the answer she finds to solve her own need, rather than to fill any objective need. Usually she is quite helpless in doing the latter, and forges emotional chains on the family that they are often powerless to break. Such a "martyr" needs help herself; she is rightly to be pitied rather than censured. But the family must beware of unwittingly helping her to cement her role; as far as possible she should be encouraged to face the reality of the situation and to accept herself and her position accordingly.

**The shoe is on the other foot.** But enough discussion of the wrong things single women do in their efforts to help the family. Parents can also make it hard for the single woman coming into a home. Mothers do this frequently by assuming (consciously or not) that it will be as easy for a stranger to take care of their family as it is for themselves. This is hardly the case. The mother of five children acquired them one at a time, got used to them by degrees—separately and collectively—and realizes quite intimately what they are all about. The single woman isn't exaggerating when she states that after a few hours with the five children she's worn out.

By this time most Catholics have probably heard the Pope's reminder that single women are called to "spiritual motherhood."

Frequently this expression is repeated too glibly; people forget what self-sacrifice, what charity spiritual motherhood requires. They act as if they expect the single woman, who evidently isn't going to marry, to turn her energies in this direction with the greatest of ease. They forget that the Pope, when he speaks about the woman who "perforce remains unmarried," says: "... with a sorrowful but submissive heart she too gives herself up to noble and most diversified good works."

*With a sorrowful heart.* No woman takes to spiritual motherhood the way she does to physical motherhood. The latter is normal to her, according to her nature. The children she mothers are her own flesh, a veritable extension of herself. No one denies that the natural mother has to work hard and, especially if her family is large, lead a life of continual sacrifice. But she is sacrificing for her *own*; her work is at the same time her reward. These are her children; this is her husband. The unmarried woman, called to spiritual motherhood, is expected to give herself unstintingly to those she serves. Yet the children she mothers remind her that she has none of her own. When she does family service the man she cooks for is another woman's husband. She must work for the family she helps as if she were truly the mother, in other words, with complete *attachment*. Yet she must step aside and claim no possession; she must serve with the greatest *detachment*.

I write this not to discourage anyone from family service, but rather as a plea for compassionate understanding from those inclined to dismiss single women as hopelessly selfish because they aren't willing to help families. The expectant mother, already overburdened with a large family, should realize that the apparently successful single woman with a good job and beautiful clothes, who seems to view her with scornful pity, may really be deeply envious of her. The mother may be embarrassed at her ungainly figure, but the single woman sees a glorious burden she herself will never carry.

Spiritual motherhood comes hard. Certainly single women should be encouraged to embrace it. Certainly God will give the grace for it, and certainly He will give with it joy and peace. But let us never forget the charity it requires, nor cease to realize that love grows slowly. Single women aren't hopeless just because at the moment they can't help their married sisters graciously.

They must be helped to learn to love by those who realize and understand their predicament. And married people—married women especially—can help them immeasurably if they will be patient and loving with them. Spiritual motherhood will let loose all the natural maternal instinct any normal woman possesses, but love is the only key to its release.

**Social and political life.** Not every single woman is called to do family service. Likewise, it would be wrong to limit the concept of spiritual motherhood to the domestic scene. The Pope clearly envisions single women, "spiritual mothers," taking responsibility in social and political life, and giving compassionate service wherever there is need for the specifically feminine virtues and qualities of devotion, mercy, tact, intuitive understanding and wholehearted generosity, in other words, in every area of society. I think most Catholic single women are bowled over by the largeness of the order. "Social and political responsibility!" They envision lady ambassadors, lady senators and lady delegates to the U.N. Since they don't possess the necessary requirements they feel that the Pope's words are not for them; they relax and do nothing. I may be wrong—and I don't mean to be derogatory toward those women with major talents—but the greatest need is for single women with *modest talents* to use them to the utmost. In every office, in every factory, in schools, social work agencies, hospitals, government service, in the local political club, in the neighborhood community, there is work single women can do to orient social conditions to Christ according to their particular talents and opportunities.

Married people need their help, above all, if they are trying to make conditions beneficial to Christian family life. Any efforts, for instance, for a family living wage or for family allowances depend for their success not only on the married man but on the single woman who works in the office with him. Her vote is cast on the bill for slum clearance, or for housing for families; her voice is as loud as his as to whether there will be space in the neighborhood for Negro families. Her opinion goes to form the vast force of public opinion favorable or damaging to the family.

Whether the single woman helps directly within the home, or whether she is engaged in work on the outside, she has an indispensable role to play in the promotion and extension of Christian family life.

**An adult apostolate.** That's why one wonders when there will be a marked awareness of the necessity for integrating single women into an organized adult apostolate. On their own, they can work for justice and perform acts of charity, but to have any real effect on social conditions they must be part of a group effort. How the integration of married and single people in a group apostolate should be done I can only conjecture. The following remarks then are not meant to be definite conclusions but points for discussion.

First of all, take the remark of the former Christian Family Movement member with which we began this article. Certainly it is a shame that married people would feel forced to drop out of the movement under pain of neglecting their own family. Certainly, too, nobody would suggest that single women take over and run the family movement. But wouldn't it be sensible to utilize the leisure of single women? Couldn't they take care of the burdensome but indispensable details of the movement: the preliminary contacting of priests as chaplains, the routine paper work, the arranging of study weeks and days of recollection, helping with the services CFM sponsors? Besides the inevitable baby-sitting for CFM conventions and retreats, single women could be responsible for the technical side of their publications, could co-operate with the actions they decide upon (whether it be promoting a friendly spirit in the parish, removing local conditions harmful to teen-agers, or, in response to an inquiry on minority groups, working in their own offices to pave the way for the hiring of Negroes).

If CFM is to accomplish its real job of changing social conditions and not just the lives of those who belong to it, I believe it needs the energy, leisure and devotion of single people. The danger is, I think, that busy mothers and fathers, who are free to participate in the fortnightly meeting, enjoy it and find it a personal build-up, have not the spare time to carry out the action of the social inquiry. CFM does something for their own family, but are they reaching other families? Or are they changing social institutions?

It would be wrong to give the impression that there has been *no* co-operation between the married and single in apostolic groups. In one parish, for instance, CFM in response to an inquiry decided to start a parish library; members of the YCW now staff

it. And surely there are other examples of co-operation, not only on the national level of both CFM and YCW but on the local level. One wishes, of course, that there would be increased cooperative effort to work on local social problems.

Lest I give the impression that the lack of an effective adult apostolate of married and single people is entirely the fault of the former, I should add that undoubtedly Catholic Action youth groups should prepare their members to "graduate" into an adult apostolate. Too often people outgrow the youth groups without being able to assume responsibility for adult action. While this may indicate a lack of proper formation on the part of the youth groups in helping their members find a personal vocation, it also points out the necessity of working in closer harmony with an adult movement so that people won't be left out on a limb when their days in the youth movement are over.

There has been some experimentation with specialized Catholic Action groups of older girls, but usually they have failed. Is it because they cannot tackle any of the real social problems by themselves? One sees the necessity for youth groups—concerned primarily with formation—to be separated into students and workers, and into groups of fellows and of girls. But is there any point on the adult level for those, for instance, who are striving for a more Christian economic order not to work together—when single women are involved in the economic order along with heads of families? This question demands more thought than I can give it here; it's a question that should be considered by those involved in specialized Catholic Action groups.

Both married and single people are responsible for the re-Christianization of the social order, all are members of the Mystical Body of Christ, all are called to heaven. And—if we are permitted to be a bit whimsical about it—if there is to be no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven, why in heaven's name do they let difference of marital status keep them from co-operating with one another on earth?

The first American group of the Little Brothers of Jesus, a religious Congregation found in France in 1933, will finish training September 30 at the Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady of Genesee, Piffard, near Rochester, New York. (The novitiate is in Africa.)

Young men interested in applying for the Little Brothers are urged to write to Rev. Charles Sala, care of the monastery.

# *The Single Woman: Her Needs*

*by HENRIETTA HRONEK*

*Here are some ideas how the single woman can satisfy her four fundamental needs as a human being.*

"Aren't you married? And such a *nice* person!" Then we single women either blush or burn up. It is assumed that we are not so by choice, and only some evil "chance" could have decreed our pitiful state.

I am not prepared to delve into all the circumstances which have left each single woman over thirty without a husband. Nor is it my desire to pontificate for us as a class and point out ways and means to make life "happy, useful and full." Every woman, whether or not she can read, has by this time realized the importance of this trilogy.

Over three decades ago, William I. Thomas, one of the first sociologists to draw conclusions from verified facts, defined man's fundamental needs as four: need for recognition, security, new experience and response (or affection).

Society in general is inclined to regard the single state as a means, not an end in itself. The married state is presented as woman's ultimate end. Even in a Christian society a woman who remains unmarried is considered somehow a failure in life. "Didn't God make woman a helpmate to man?" Therefore she has failed to follow God's plan. Of course, she can "go into a convent." But it is fearful to be left single in the world. That is the implication. And yet society in general is happy and relieved to share in the benefits of work performed by the single woman as nurse, teacher, writer, social worker, saleswoman, or any other role which a married woman—whose vocation is to raise a family—has no freedom for. Meanwhile, the needs of the single

woman for recognition, security, new experience and affection often seem frustrated.

In their "predicament" single women are usually advised about things *to do*: join a social club, acquire a hobby, take part in parish activities, take a course of study. The emphasis is on *action*, leaving out any particular goal. And those who are prevented by circumstances, including their own temperament, from doing much of this outside work, envy the "fortunate" women who are "always doing things." In comparison, their lives seem very dull indeed. Yet we find single women doing these things who are still insecure, lonely, unappreciated, "doing the same old thing."

**Change our attitudes.** First of all, as Christians, we must re-examine our belief in the Mystical Body of Christ. We can take the term as used by St. Paul as an analogy of the human body; or we can take the parallel of the Vine and the branches, as used by Christ, to describe the closeness of our mutual relationship and our function. No single cell—no particular leaf—is exactly like another cell or leaf. Each performs a function which no other can duplicate. When disease attacks any part of a living organism, the other cells immediately redouble their "duties" and rush to the rescue; medications or minerals supplement, not replace, the natural energies. In case of disability of one of the senses in the human body, for example sight or touch, another faculty, such as hearing or smell, is augmented.

To see in the single state merely a matter of "chance" is to rule out the Father's care for the Mystical Body of His Son. Instead of pitying the single woman, or wondering *why* she is that way, let us instead recognize the state for what it is: part of the divine plan. It is not a "left-over" for those who are in some way unsuited for marriage or the religious life. As Pope Pius XII has pointed out, it is providential that in grave times such as ours there are single women free to take upon themselves responsibilities in social and political life.

The designs of God are always those of love. He has permitted certain peculiar circumstances which make *this* woman single at this particular time. Acceptance of her state is a motion of acquiescence in His designs. It is a motion of love. Location matters only as a mode of expression. Love communicates life. Therefore her function in the Mystical Body is performed as a

single person, whether it's house or office work, nursing or teaching, work in hotel, factory, store, library, or government. The important point is that she is a *living* member—through love. Whether in a position which places her in prominence or not, she is doing God's particular work at *this* particular time. To do God's work requires no apology. The impetus being given to secular institutes by the present Holy Father will do much to bring deserved recognition to the single state *in the world*.

**Sense of insecurity.** As I go from day to day, alone for the most part, my feeling of insecurity can grow into a panic. I can become a bundle of envy and frustration *unless* "Our Father" comes to mean more than a printed formula and I begin to live only a day at a time. Whether I am a potential St. Therese or an Alcoholic Anonymous, my Father in heaven knows my need for all things. Only His providence is fool-proof. Catherine Doherty, the former Baroness de Hueck, had "everything": good home, servants, luxuries, life insurance in six digits, entree into the exclusive society in any country—and yet, literally overnight, this "security" was gone. All she had left was the faith in divine providence which was not only to carry her through miseries and misfortunes of all kinds, but to restore to her "a hundredfold" what she had lost. I also like to recall a maxim quoted by a woman member of Alcoholics Anonymous: "The problem before you is not greater than the Power behind you." He is our security.

Do I crave for "new experience" in my dull life? Rev. Raymond W. Murray, C.S.C., a recognized authority in sociology, says: "Modern industry which often harnesses a person to some simple monotonous machine process where skill is unnecessary, is said to leave the normal individual with an unsatiated desire for new experience." But these moments come to the movie star or the ballet dancer, proverbially the epitome of "glamor" to many a dulled eye. Some of my friends who find office work and teaching unsatisfying, expressed their envy of my "exciting" job when I was matron in a woman's prison. I know a writer who went through the usual struggles for recognition. After a while he found his syndicated weekly column "a drag." Whatever our work, no matter how enviable to others, we all experience dullness at times as part of our lot. We become restless and long for a change.

One remedy, suggested in "how" books, is to consider how

fortunate we are in comparison to others. For example I, who consider office work planned by another as deadening, should remember my waitress friend who would be relieved to replace her tray-toting and after-dinner messes for the bliss of a filing cabinet; or the sewing-machine operator I know, who would gladly exchange her hundreds of yards of skirts for the privilege of typing thousands and thousands of envelopes. But it seems to me that this makes for a false superiority. The waitress, the factory or assembly-line girl are important to Christ *where they are*. I also am doing His work even in a deadening routine job. But because of human nature, at times we forget this. We are inclined to view our singleness of life as the rusting agent.

Christ has a key fitted precisely to *this* need for new experience. "To him who asks of thee, give; and from him who would borrow of thee, do not turn away." Rarely will I be asked for money, but Christ certainly had more than material possessions in mind. Sometimes people want a little sympathy, perhaps only a greeting, a smile; most often they only want a listener. They may come when my temper is short; it may well be that the one who asks has only himself in mind without thinking of my lack of time or convenience. I may not be able to fill the need, but at least I should not turn away. There is a grace of freshness attached to my response. Mounier called it "the sacrament of the moment." No matter how ill-timed, my dull day has been interrupted by Christ; *He* is my "new experience."

**Need for affection and response.** Romantic love and mother love are channels for satisfying this, perhaps the greatest of all needs. But as a single woman I must realize (1) *that they are not the only channels*. Besides the love of a child for its parents, for me there is also the love of benevolence or friendship. A study of the gospels will reveal this at its best in the life of Christ. He expects me to give even my life. At times this seems easier than to give of my time or something of which I have grown fond. (2) *that I cannot begin to receive until I have begun to give*. "With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you." If I complain that "nobody loves me," it is a clear index that I live only for myself. If I lock myself in a dark cellar, I can claim that the sun has stopped shining. It has—because I have locked it out. Whether I am a sweetheart, wife, mother or daughter, if I think in terms of "I," not "you," I

automatically lock love out.

As a single woman I must accept (1) *that these channels of love are not interchangeable*. When a wife treats her husband as a child, when a father satisfies his sex desires with his daughter, we instinctively recognize it as a disorder and pity its victims. I cannot expect the thrills of sex or mother love from friendship. (2) *that, by God's plan, some outlets for affection are closed to me though I retain all my potential*. Shall I allow only a small dribble to flow into one channel and withhold the rest? When three or four streams join into one river, they can be a powerful avalanche of power. To think back on the analogy of the human body: if one or two faculties are inoperative, why cannot those remaining become keener? Millions of human beings are in a bad state in the world mainly because of the lack of brotherly love. I cannot reach them all, but I can reach the few, maybe only one, whom God places in my life each day. Shall I give *totally* of myself or only the bare minimum?

All love depends on two ingredients: self-denial and giving to another. A married woman and I can envy each other what we don't possess. Or we can restore a little of the divine order by making *all* our love work in the outlets open to us.

**A happy single woman.** Of the many single women I know, the one who radiates an other-worldly charm is now a woman of sixty. Her grade school education was interrupted by sickness and she never finished high school. She has lived with one lung for several decades and an internal operation in her twenties deprived her of vital organs. Through a relative's mismanagement, she was left with barely enough to live on. Relatives and friends of her social status have gradually disappeared because financially she can't afford to entertain and physically it dissipates waning energy. For over twenty years she has given her services as organist and choir director in a small country parish, and until a few years ago she held catechism classes—all without pay. For many years, until his death, she cared for her father who gradually became crotchety and hard to live with. Of the many people whom she or her parents helped generously, I know only three or four who make some effort to contact her; the others have forgotten she exists. She could have become a complaining, soured old woman. Instead, she is vibrant, charming, with a mind that can relish Disney or Maritain, and a manner

that radiates security and peace. She has a knack for ferreting out the needs of her neighbors. (As I write this, it makes her seem unreal, like someone out of a fairytale.) When I find people who are mentally disturbed I bring them to her. The "magic" has never failed. She personifies the famous quotation of St. John of the Cross: "Where there is no love, put love and you will find love."

**Christ holds the key.** He has had first-hand experience of all our needs. Studying His life from a purely natural level, who could have had less recognition than the Miracle-Worker Who "did not know letters" and Who came from, of all hill-billy places, Nazareth? My insecurity will hardly equal His Who, during His public life from day to day, did not know where He would lay His head, and Whose earlier life depended on what could be earned each day. In a country where habits and customs have changed little even two thousand years after His death, "the same old way" was sacrosanct. And as for a response of love, outside His Mother, He could rely on very few. Even His closest followers looked for what they could *get* from Him rather than what they could *give*. So the key He holds out is workable because He tried it first.

Wherever we touch our neighbor, we touch God. And with Him there is no inferiority, no insecurity, no tedium, and *always* there is Love.



# *Vocation to God*

ANONYMOUS

*A young woman discusses the vocation  
to a dedicated single life in the world.*

Everyone and everything belongs to God. All creation in the earth and under the sea exists to glorify Him. Every Christian has a vocation to follow Christ. Yet we know that Our Lord asks certain men and women to follow Him totally and completely, consecrating to Him their bodies and their souls forever. Our Lord plants a desire for Himself in their hearts and makes them understand that in proportion to their generosity in loving Him so will grace come to the world. With such a desire of apostolate many young people have found their way into a cloister. Many continue to do so in our present times, and through their hidden life of love people unknown to them personally come to know the love of Jesus.

However, there are other young people today who, feeling drawn to God in a contemplative life, remain in the world. Accepting fully everything that a real lay life requires of them, they endeavor to live a life of constant prayer, totally and completely given up to God and His will, living from Him and for Him all day and every day with the hope of doing so forever.

**Lay people in the full sense.** The foregoing may sound strange to most American Catholics, who might admire the ideal of such a life but who find it hard to believe it possible. We still hear very little in our country about the possibilities of a complete dedication to God in this manner. In the majority of talks on vocations the emphasis is clearly on the priesthood and the religious life and on marriage. It is interesting to note however, that Pope Pius XII in his recent encyclical entitled *Holy Virginity*

(*Sacra Virginitas*) in speaking of people consecrated to God by a vow of perfect chastity says the following: "And while this perfect chastity is the subject of one of the three vows which constitute the religious state, and is also required by the Latin Church of clerics in major orders and demanded from members of Secular Institutes, it also flourishes among many who are *lay people in the full sense* (emphasis supplied): men and women who are not constituted in a public state of perfection and yet by private promise or vow completely abstain from marriage and sexual pleasures, in order to serve their neighbor more freely and to be united with God more easily and more closely.

"To all of these beloved sons and daughters who in any way have consecrated their bodies and souls to God, We address Ourselves, and exhort them earnestly to strengthen their holy resolution and be faithful to it."

The Holy Father's words may be an incentive to young people who believe God wishes them to live a life consecrated to Him in the world, and may cause them to do some exploring of this vocation. If there seems to be an absence of publicity about specific secular institutes and particular lay vocations, this is simply to safeguard the *lay* life of those who have the vocation. Disclosing their identity would serve no purpose and give them a difference which does not exist in reality. Imagine Mary Smith trying to live the life of an ordinary working girl if the whole office knows that she is totally dedicated to God in a "special" form of life. Her hidden life is very much a personal affair between herself and God which will overflow into love of her neighbor. The office should benefit—but they don't need to know about it!

**Finding out about lay vocations.** The question then arises as to how one can learn about the different lay vocations. Since to exist they must have permission from proper diocesan authorities, one can contact the chancery office for information as to what forms there are in one's own diocese. One can also make inquiries of spiritual directors or confessors interested in the lay apostolate. However, possibly the best way of understanding this life is personal contact with people who live it. They best explain their own particular form of vocation and communicate its spirit to others.

Every Catholic boy and girl might at least be told of the

possibility of total dedication to God in a lay life. In view of the apostolic constitution on secular institutes and the recent encyclical on *Holy Virginity* one can even say that they have a *right* to know of these public pronouncements of the Holy Father when they are deciding on their vocation. Those who think a lay vocation is something new (and therefore suspect) could be reminded of the consecrated virgins and widows who helped the Apostles and the priests in the early years of the Church. Actually the first religious order came into existence in about the fourth century. The Holy Spirit breathes where He wills and in different ways in different times. There are thousands of young men and women who have lay vocations in many countries today. Some are no longer so young either, having lived such a life for thirty or forty years!

**How I chose.** Perhaps you would like to know how I came to decide on such a vocation. Perhaps that would help you to see that it's "for real," as the kids say nowadays.

For some years I had been an active "lay apostle," devoted to a "cause" imbued with the ideas of social reform based on the papal encyclicals. I was desirous of teaching others, if only by example, the joy of Christianity integrated into their lives, of Christian community worshipping and working and having fun together—all of us one in Christ our Head. I fell in love with the gospels of Our Lord and knew that when He said "Come" He meant *me!* I tried to live the counsels of perfection as best I could—always desirous that my neighbor might come to know how much he is loved by God. There was never a dull moment. Time after time I experienced the little "miracles" in daily living that make one so conscious of the loving providence of our heavenly Father. Little by little I learned the importance of accepting God's will lovingly in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary circumstances of every day.

Despite all this "realization" of the Christian life, for which I can never be thankful enough, I was not fully at peace. Since I had seen some signs of restlessness among other lay people, I resolved to try to "stay put" and leave the change strictly up to God. During these years, on days of recollection and retreats, the beauty of marriage in Christ was often explained. I came to know young couples whose marriages seemed made in heaven. I wondered if my vocation were marriage. Working—a bit feverishly

sometimes—for the restoration of the world in Christ with some wonderful guy who had the same aspirations toward holiness as I had, I wondered about my own "restoration." Marriage couldn't have looked more inviting, and there was no appreciable man shortage in my circles. In addition to having one eye on marriage the other one was scanning my life and its constant round of activity—despite daily Mass and Holy Communion and as much prayer as I could find time for. I feared becoming a tired Christian; there were days when I would have thrown in the towel and settled for a very modest sum.

**Virginity.** Then along came direct contact with Joan, a lay person totally dedicated to God, who thought I might be interested in her vocation. She talked to me first, not of chastity "in or out of wedlock" as it had been put to me rather dully in the past, but of the glory and beauty of Christian virginity. Virginity was something we never touched upon in our apostolic bull sessions—the usefulness to the apostolate of the single life, yes, but virginity, no. It was rarely mentioned in retreats and days of recollection. It was almost a word one didn't dare use—perhaps just for people going into convents.

I certainly desired that every one of us should give glory to God by being a saint. Yet it hadn't occurred to me that union with God is possible most easily to those who have *decided* on a life of virginity, a life of total belonging to God alone. I had previously thought that a total Christian life would be possible without ever taking a promise or vow. I had even felt that it would be more perfect to live from day to day in a simple yet conceivably total acceptance of God's will. It is very possible that God wants this life for some people. In *Sacra Virginitas* nevertheless the Holy Father says: "And the masters of Sacred Theology, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, supported by the authority of Augustine, teach that virginity does not possess the stability of virtue unless there is a vow to keep it forever intact. And certainly those, who obligate themselves by perpetual vow to keep their virginity, put into practice in the most perfect way possible what Christ said about perpetual abstinence from marriage; nor can it justly be affirmed that the intention of those who wish to leave open a way of escape from this state of life is better and more perfect."

In regard to the last-quoted thought of the Holy Father, I

realize now that in not ruling out marriage I had been leaving the door open to it. When it became clear that I should choose God alone, in a vow of perfect chastity, then I knew that at last I was taking the positive step of closing the door. In a very deep sense this was a relief! The Holy Father calls this a "liberation," yet he also quotes Chrysostom: "The root, and the flower, too, of virginity is a crucified life."

**Prayer.** Joan also talked to me about prayer, of living from God at every second of one's life. Now the idea of "praying always" wasn't exactly new. I had heard often about the practice of the presence of God and the sacrament of the present moment, and the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. Holy priests had told me how to work on such matters. The trouble was I did not even pretend to persevere. Now here was Joan again claiming that it could be possible. She was "engaged" to persevere in a life of prayer forever! I was impressed.

Joan did not try to recruit me. She explained the vocation very simply and then suggested that I pray more—the uninterrupted hour a day of mental prayer that her vocation called for. Whether or not God wanted me to have this vocation or another, the extra prayer would be a good idea, she said. I couldn't argue with that. Yet where in my busy life would I find a whole hour for prayer? The upshot of it was that the prayer became possible when I finally used some common sense. Getting up earlier in the morning can be done only if one gets to bed earlier the night before. I decided that God could take care of the world and its problems after midnight—and even after 11 p.m. as a rule! Once I became faithful to the hour of mental prayer, God soon let me know that He Himself was all I had ever really wanted; I wanted only to be used in any way He saw fit, in any kind of work, in success, in failure—to live a life of love and faith. I began to experience, however dimly, that constant prayer might *really* be possible (especially if one lived long enough!); that all work (the most consuming and arduous of intellectual or physical tasks) can consciously be approached in either of two ways—in God or not in Him.

**Definite training.** Joan pointed out that there is no community life in this particular form of lay vocation (which does not happen to be a secular institute). There is definite training and the necessary support to enable one to grasp the ideas of the

vocation and to live them. The living is what is important. Spiritual and doctrinal formation continue all one's life—training which is very solid, but which is adapted to the circumstances of one's lay state. There are priests who give training in theology and the spiritual life to those who follow this vocation (which, incidentally, is recognized by bishops in various dioceses throughout the world). Yearly retreats and days of recollection are arranged.

If a girl sincerely believes she can love God *more* by entering a convent, then she probably has a vocation to the religious life and off she should go to a convent. However, this does not imply that a girl having a true lay vocation remains in the world because she lacks the generosity necessary to enter religious life. Lay vocations will not deter religious vocations nor vice versa.

From the time I decided to try to live this vocation, every person I have met, every thing, every second has assumed an importance I never dreamed possible. As a lay person who belongs totally to God and to Our Lady I am especially committed to order my life as perfectly as possible. I must be attentive to what God wants of me at each moment—usually to participate fully in lay life. God's glory may very well call for me to give pleasure to Mrs. Jones and her two kids and take them to the movies, or to have a cigarette with nervous Miss Brown while she tells me her troubles, or have a cocktail at the home of friends of my family. More and more God gives me the grace consciously to have Him as the source of the endless round of activities of a lay life. When I get bogged down the "return" to Him can be made in the twinkling of an eye. Life for a beginner in this vocation is a succession of "returns" to God, of constant letting go of the goods of this world, of creatures, to use them as though I used them not—yet at the same time to love them because they belong to God and have been redeemed by Christ. I must constantly try to enter into other people's thoughts and let go of my own, especially some of those "good ideas" I cling to supposedly for God's glory but in reality for my own. Perhaps the very thing God wants me to do today He will want me to "give up" tomorrow.

**There are difficulties.** The life of a lay person totally dedicated to God is not an easy one. It involves the same tremen-

dous obligation as in the life of a religious. The total giving of one's will to God in the life of a religious is often "imposed" by community rule or bells. In a lay life the total "letting go" of one's will must be freely desired and carried out in accordance with the inspirations of grace and modified by the circumstances of one's family, work, and even one's social life. Nevertheless, no matter how it is accomplished—even with great love on our part—the giving up of our own will does violence to our nature and is therefore sometimes quite painful.

Secular institutes vary in the kind and amount of formation given their members and therefore I imagine that trials and tribulations differ also. My own vocation, and I repeat it is not a secular institute, has its own particular difficulties—not the least of which is loneliness. Even though one is very much in the midst of the world, one cannot embrace the world without first returning it to God. The loneliness one feels in the presence of happy family life must be embraced with great generosity and there, in the depths of one's soul, one finds God Who is Infinite Love and one has everything and one is no longer lonely. When there seems so much to do for the establishment of the kingdom, one must have faith to discard a few "good works" and take time to be alone with God in prayer. This may all be without any "feeling" except the sure knowledge that is faith. The demands of my vocation are very exacting and it is not easy to be faithful.

I have become convinced that God is really running His universe, that He wills only our good and that it is impossible to trust Him enough, that He wants some of us to trust Him to folly in the world. There are hundreds of people today living this exact same vocation as I—teachers, nurses, social workers, charwomen, waitresses, sales girls, secretaries, Catholic Action leaders. The list is endless. Although I am just a neophyte I know from experience after two years that there is no end to the growing in loving God. At the beginning I thought I had fully understood the requirements for this vocation. Now I know that the understanding just grows and grows and God demands more and more. Everything, everyone, every event of my very ordinary lay life must be looked at in the light of God's love. This should be true of the life of every Christian, but in a very total way it is true for me.

# *Single Men—Afraid to Marry?*

*by ED WILLOCK*

*A discussion of the other side of the single woman problem: single men.*

I have always contended that one with minor talents should be content to play a minor role. That is why I make no attempt here to be profound but only to be provocative. This slice of prose is designed not to solve a difficulty but to start an argument.

When I state (as I do) that the evils of individualism are being perpetuated above all by our unmarried men, I don't expect such a charge to solve anything—but I am wistfully hopeful that it will start something. Nor do I apologize for so sweeping a generality merely because there are exceptions. When we deal with things *as they are*, such sweeping generalities are as close as one can hope to come to the truth. It would be very convenient for the critics of society if there were some dogma or formulae that applied to social mores. Fortunately there are not. I cannot say that all unmarried men are irresponsible. I charge no young man of my acquaintance with selfishness. I merely contend that the generality of single men are afraid to marry, so afraid, in fact, that there are some eight million over the age of thirty in this country who have avoided its burdens altogether.

I had occasion, a few years back, to address a series of talks to groups of engaged young men. I frequently noted (aloud) that the advanced years and demeanor of my audience was such as to lead one to suspect that the Sacrament they immediately anticipated was Extreme Unction rather than Matrimony. Their caution verging on phobia reminded me of a line of Oscar Wilde's: "Seldom had men looked so sadly on the sky!" Whatever enthusiasm they might have had lay hidden behind a grim preoccupation with the direful possibility that babies might be forthcoming.

These prospective grooms had more than the traditional and normal pre-marital jitters. Somehow they sensed that in choosing to marry and have a family they were rashly departing from standard operating procedure. One young man, for example, lifted no eyebrows among his fellows when he attempted to involve me in hypothetical speculations as to whether he should, as a prudent parent, have some assurance of his financial ability to provide a college education for his child-to-be, before setting in motion the chain of circumstances which would make this studious child's existence likely. I rudely refused to become involved, saying that (as far as I could see) worries concerning the advanced education of an unborn child on the part of a yet unwed parent were more indicative of panic than prudence. At that point in the proceedings I made an observation which I will repeat here since it lies at the roots of the discussion in which we are involved.

**Holy matrimony.** Catholic marriage requires that the couple have a fairly precise notion of what the Sacrament means and the state involves. Facing these facts is frightening after one has become used to the term "marriage" as covering every possible eventuality, including legal cohabitation and the "girl-for-you-n-boy-for-me" clambake. When we start to be definitive and precise in our terminology, realizing that Matrimony implies *sacrifice*, that it holds out the *large* family as its ideal, that it expects parents to give their lives (and give up their "fun") for their children, then we begin to see that Matrimony is as radical a departure from the ideals of self-satisfaction by which we commonly live as any foreign "ism." The defense of culture, religion, and tradition is essentially a defense of the Sacrament of Matrimony. In practice, Christian marriage generally implies a preference for babies rather than baubles.

In other words, to take Matrimony seriously is to deny almost every postulate upon which our social habits are based. It is to defend fidelity and loyalty, it is to prefer the generation to come to one's own pleasure, it is to prefer an economy which supports the large family rather than the shrewd trader. Many married people have discovered various loopholes (they think) by which they can enjoy the conveniences and pleasures of marriage while closing their eyes to its responsibilities. The prospective novice is not so capable of self-deception, consequently he's scared to

death. The sad result of this fear (or one of them) is that the most likely recruit in the papal push to reorganize the social order, the young father, is gradually becoming a rarity.

**Social responsibility.** I expect an argument on that point of the "most likely recruit," so let me explain. The so-called "social" encyclicals have not been enthusiastically received in the United States. Here is one reason for the indifference. The Sacrament most directly concerned with the social area is Matrimony. It brings into being the social unit: the family. Raising children is the primary cultural act. The best measure of the social order is its fitness for children (which is also a good measure of a family, neighborhood or city). To reorganize the social order is a strenuous and difficult task requiring courage and aggressiveness. There is no vocation to which it is more essential than that of fatherhood. Usually only the young father has the energy and zest for such a task. One should not expect priests or monks to be greatly excited about social reform. The priest has his routine pastoral duties, and his preoccupation with the eternal verities and spiritual welfare leaves him little time to bother with political or economic matters. Women generally find fulfillment in personal and domestic matters. Social reorganization is not primarily their meat.

If these facts are true, indifference to the inspired papal directives concerning social change indicates a weakening of the vocation of fatherhood. I am dealing here with one social factor contributing to this weakness, namely, the tendency in young men to flee the marital bonds or else postpone the step to such an age that they are no longer alert or energetic enough to accept the challenges that accompany the vocation.

**The higher state.** I realize in bringing this point up that I am touching upon a problem which interests only a minority of Catholic young men. Most single men justify their irresponsibility toward marriage by the generally accepted law of life, namely, "Look out for number one!" I admire their logic. It is only their premise with which I would quarrel.

There is a small group however, many of whom are ex-seminarians, who justify their flight from harness upon a theological point which states that the single state is a *higher* state. This point is but vaguely understood and resembles in profundity the proverbial alibi of the late husband: "I was sitting up with

a sick friend." Whatever Saint Paul had in mind (for it is to him they vaguely refer), I am sure he was not recommending social irresponsibility. It is apparent that those men (and women) who choose the disciplines of religious obedience and trials of community living to wedded bliss have chosen a more direct route to heaven. It is also apparent that a rare individual can give more selfless service to society by remaining single.

But a young man beholden to no one, answerable only to his own whims (however much he identifies these whims with the movement of the Holy Spirit) has reason to doubt the spiritual altitude at which he is flying. Religious superiors and wives perform a similar function in that they help a man distinguish between whimsy and duty. Without one or the other to keep him in line a young man is likely to wallow in a home-made asceticism or aestheticism which shorn of pious terminology is only a peculiar form of self-indulgence. Apart from the tasks of monks and clergy, there are very few works, corporal or spiritual, that cannot be done as well by the married as the single.

I am not at all reluctant to admit the possibility that there can be exceptions to this generality. God's ways are far too mysterious to be fitted nicely into a sociological pattern no matter how wisely conceived. Yet there is one point the single man should dwell upon when he considers the justifiability of his state before God. He should face the fact that however blithesome he finds his individuality, in choosing it he is inadvertently condemning some girl to the same predicament.



## *Comments*

I would say off-hand that the single woman is much less of a problem than she is an indispensable handmaiden to the procreative activities of the married woman. Mothering children is something more than mere biological production of them. For the full creativity of motherhood there is the further requirement of the mothering of the mind and the soul of the child, the mothering of society-at-large to create proper and healthful social conditions for the rearing of children, and the mothering of the Mystical Body through prayer, sacrifices and the filling up of those things that are wanting of mothers in the Body of Christ.

In all these I seem to see the indispensable role of the single woman. Far from being a futile, useless and uncreative misfit, the single woman is the chief factor in the soul-mothering of children. It is the single woman who teaches children their catechism both in school and in the many-sided activities of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and allied societies. The single woman is the mind-mother of the child of our day. She teaches them their lessons in public and private schools, passes on to them their cultural heritage, and trains them in the things that make their lives richer, deeper, and more intelligently lived.

Anyone who has lived and worked in Washington or New York knows that the wheels of government and of the nation's economy would stop tomorrow if all the single women went on strike. It is the single women who keep the lines of communication alive. It is the office managers and secretaries who "cover up" for the deficiencies and absences and long lost weekends of the rulers of finance and government.

"Behind every successful man stands a woman," is the old adage. But that woman is not his wife. She is the single woman who taught him in school, who does his work and his thinking for him at the office, who relieves him of the myriad details that would hamper his focusing on larger problems, and who never gets credit for any of his success.

For myself, if there wasn't some single woman nagging me for an article, I'd never write half the stuff that I do.

—From a priest

The single woman must live a singular life of devotion in order that she may not sink to a life of *singular devotion*. Our temptations are greater in this line—we may easily devote our life to our own advantage, in excessive care of the body or exclusive care of our soul. There are fluffy souls within the faith as well as outside. Within the fold we have neurotic individuals carrying the faith so tightly clutched that they are snuffing out its very breath.

—From a single woman

Since I'm married, unwillingly-single women may justifiably resent anything I say, in the same way that a hospital patient may resent attempts on the part of well people to console him or, worst of all, help him to bear his sufferings. However, I was in the state of singleness long enough to know quite well the feelings of the single woman who would rather be married.

If you want to get married, I think you ought to take normal means of meeting men. No one is going to blaze a trail to your door if you never go out socially, never make opportunities for yourself to take part in mixed group activities. The Lord helps those who help themselves. However, having taken normal means to meet suitable men, do please remember the will of God. God hasn't forgotten you, and if he wants you to get married, He's certainly going to see to it that you do—as long as you do your share in the project! I think one of the most comforting sayings ever said is "The need of the moment is the will of God." If we can know that with our hearts as well as understand it with our minds, and try not to fret or be impatient when The Man doesn't arrive and doesn't arrive, not only will we be more serene and enjoy life more, but we'll be much more likely to attract The Man when he does come. And if he never does come, that's still the will of God—a hard saying, but He can give us grace to take it.

—From a newly married woman

I'm sure I can't shed any light on the subject of single women which I know has been considered from every viewpoint by wiser heads—still it is something I have to think of often, whenever I think of some of my closest friends. Many of those we meet who are so intensely lonely are girls of high intellectual capacity, whose interests have always been in academic or artistic fields. Persons of superior intelligence can easily be led astray by it and become so thoroughly immersed in their interests that they realize too late these are no substitute for life. They are generally the sensitive ones too, timid or inept in social situations, whose social development has never kept pace with their mental development. It is bitter to wake up and find oneself outdone by girls who can carry small talk to lengths just short of infinity without saying anything at all. Perhaps this could be partly remedied by parents through proper education. Gifted children require special protection against their own gifts. Girls especially need to be taught how to meet people in a friendly manner from the time they are babies. They should be introduced to a variety of social situations before they become too self-conscious to acquire poise.

The pattern of life today creates a strange conflict in woman's life. She is taught to be above all self-sufficient, economically independent, politically vociferous, etc. But in order to decide to marry someone, she must make an act of surrender that is decidedly opposed to everything that makes up woman's independence. I believe that many possibly good

marriages never come to be because the girl can't accept this very complete and actually very humiliating circumstance. She realizes at some point or other that to marry this person, even though she may love him, is to identify herself with all his present and future failings and weaknesses, all his errors, all that she has worked so hard to conquer and camouflage in herself. This is truly an awful moment, the more so if one realizes that it extends not only into the social world but into the spiritual world, an identification that will go on for eternity. The fear of being betrayed haunts every woman because every woman must realize somehow dimly that her true position is one of submission. (Of course I am not speaking just about the physical order, for this may possibly be the least difficult.) So the question arises, What if I give in, and he betrays me? To entrust oneself to another is a fearful proposition, particularly after the kind of training-for-independence our girls today receive.

Perhaps future mishaps could be avoided by education. Less stress on the intellectual in our colleges and high schools (for girls), more emphasis on the natural state which is marriage as well as its supernatural aspects, more careful planning of social development for our young girls with—let's face it—marriage in view. Angelic attitudes sound lovely, but we aren't angels. As a matter of fact, for those not born to the religious life, the hazards to faith and purity can only with difficulty be offset without marriage (a personal opinion). The world challenges us to a wearing battle of attrition, during years of which our virtues may actually be worn away instead of fortified. We should face these facts and teach our children to face them.

—From a wife and mother

Singleness, as a state of life, vocation or existence, as the case may be, can't be truly appreciated unless one is single, or only reached his or her vocation later than what's usually considered the norm. We can all draw conclusions about it from the outside looking in, but one can't identify completely with the single person unless one is or has been single for a good part of her adult life. Yet people are prone to do just that. One hears generalizations regarding all walks of life, but let's remember that in a sense all of us make unique use of whatever state we are in—because of what we are and what our state means to us.

What I want to point out here is the fact that the single woman (I'm not going to try to discuss the single man for I never was one) needs more empathy than many of us realize. And I say "empathy" advisedly. I say it in defense of the unhappy old maid segment of the single populace so that they won't be compared too freely with the all too rare type—the delightful single woman, the one whose presence we look forward to and who seems rich in terms of the gratifications she finds in life and is able to give to others. Such an adjustment is, unfortunately, one we find all too infrequently. It's my feeling that unless a woman feels her state as a single woman is the will of God, is His intended vocation

for her (and isn't using this notion as a rationalization) and, even better, unless she feels as a complement to this that she is meant to be His spouse in a direct, dedicated way in the world, emptiness, loneliness, even a kind of psychological barrenness prevail over her days. It's a struggle with her "self" that must be waged continually—no matter how resigned she may be to the status quo and no matter how much she puts herself to building a meaningful life. Even if one owes obedience to a witch-like superior in the religious life, or is locked in marriage to a seemingly merciless husband whose drinking habits rock the peace and security of each member of the family, there is, nonetheless, a unifying thread—a tie between need and growing fulfillment. There is a *raison d'être* if you will.

In the case of the single woman who, for one reason or another, finds herself living a life she hadn't hoped for or expected, there is the necessity of finding satisfactions which aren't an integral part of her everyday life. This must be stipulated since so many single girls work from 9 to 5 in offices where their duties can't be described as feminine outlets or tasks. There's also the humiliation of a kind of stigma-like attitude with which the single woman is met. But again, the real pain of the single life is expressed in the symbols around her—symbols of her negative existence: no one who phones her each day, to whom she is intimately bound; no babies who are hers to feed and dress and comfort, no one to wait for—be he around the corner or 3,000 miles away; no daily routine which, humdrum as it may seem, finds meaning in the common sharing of a goal, through family life or, in the case of religious, community life.

Of course, there's the old bromide, "but that's God's will for her," which many of us throw to unhappy people—using it to smother the possibilities of putting ourselves out for unhappy women who may be very trying. And may I add that I'm not writing a brief to encourage people to pamper those single women who become a trial to all who have to associate with them. I think that kind of use of the single state calls for a verbal shock treatment now and then. But I do feel we need to appreciate the emptiness which a woman knows within when she is without a vow to God or man—left without the tangible rudder which gives meaning to her being.

—From a recent bride

It is not accidental to be a single woman in the world. It is providential! God knows the needs of the world, of His people in the world. Prayers rise up to Him continually; prayers of those in need, those who are sick and in pain, those who are confused, those who are suffering. God sees and hears these prayers. He knows of the untrained, undisciplined youth of our time; so cocksure, so confused, so pitiful, so unaware of His love; and the despairing grown-ups; weary, hungry for understanding, friendship, love, order. God, the merciful God, Who never passed suffering by without sanctifying it, healing it, redeeming it, knows these

often unspoken, even unthought prayers. Through those who seek to do His will, He answers the needs of those who pray.

We need not so much take the credit for our good works. Through us, His ready instruments, God answers the prayers of His poor and suffering whom He loves. It is God Who is all good. His love is universal, ours self-centered. He transforms our small, little selfish love, our small potentialities for good to works of joy and grace and great good wherever and however they can most please and serve Him. Wonderfully our prayers are answered too in finding fulfillment and joy in a life of good meaning, in a realization of a community with God and the world around us.

—From a woman doing family service

I feel so bad for all the single girls who don't understand their vocation and find life empty and boring (and I know plenty of them!) whereas really it is quite exciting and adventurous never to know from one day to the next where God will see the need of a woman's touch, and call on us to fill it. As I see it, that's why He has deliberately planned for us to be kept single—so that we can be free and available to serve Him, wherever He needs us—like an unassigned reservoir of womanhood at His disposal, to despatch wherever He wants, wherever one of His creatures needs a woman's love and warmth and compassion.

As a caseworker in child welfare, I can see His designs so plainly, for me as a single woman fulfilling myself in service to children, for my children gaining through me under God's providence the love and warmth they have been otherwise denied. All children are God's children, their care and nurturing is of utmost importance to Him. What is motherhood anyway—but being God's instrument for the procreation and nurturing of His children for His sake? Who can really say "my own child"? Even a mother holds a child only as long as God wills that she hold *His* child. All the maternal instincts of her nature are given to her not to possess this child for herself but to preserve him and form him for the glory and service of God. So, as a single woman, a child welfare worker, He asks of me to be a "mother" to His children, to give all the tenderness and love of a woman's nature to children whom He formed in the wombs of other women. He did not use me for procreation—He is coming to me for love.

The mother of a family comforts every hurt, fills every need constantly of the same children she calls "her own." One day I comfort a freckle-faced boy crying in pain from a tetanus shot; the next I hold a little girl with long curls crying her heart out in fear of moving into a new home. Each of us, the mother and the worker, is giving to God's child what He wants given from a woman's heart for love of Him.

Don't think, with all this idealizing, that I don't know all about the little human angles to the single woman role that make it so hard some-

times. I'm really going to have a beautiful chance very soon to put myself to the test. My high school class is having its fifteenth reunion this year. You know what that means. Just about every other girl in the class will be there with her husband. And me, alone. Dinner and dancing, and all that. I've been tempted not to go, as I'm out of town and have to travel to get there, or I've considered inviting some male friend as an escort for the evening. But I've really had it out with myself that this is the time to carry through on this. Do I accept this role with serenity and dignity, or not? Why should I try to camouflage the real situation? I am alone, I am unmarried at 32. So what? I'm a productive citizen, a happy person, a member of the class. Let me be accepted for myself as I am. There's no need for embarrassment, for apology, for discomfort! But that's why we feel it: we have let ourselves react to the subtle social pressure that to be self-respecting as a woman one has to get her man; not to get one, makes one undesirable or a failure in some way. And so, a part of me secretly dreads exposing this failure to my former classmates. Isn't that silly, really? So I am definitely going alone—with the poise and confidence and security that the awareness of my vocation has brought me.

—From a social worker

## *Book Reviews*

**FORTITUDE AND TEMPERANCE**  
by Josef Pieper  
Pantheon, \$2.75

The writings of Josef Pieper, a professor at the University of Munster in Germany and at present guest lecturer at

the University of Notre Dame, are now becoming known and acclaimed among American readers. The present book, two correlated essays translated by Daniel F. Coogan, will certainly increase his prestige.

Dr. Pieper's philosophy is that of St. Thomas Aquinas. In fact, in the introduction to the essay on Fortitude, the author states that "this excursus makes no claim whatever to originality of thought. Rather, it contains not a single sentence that could not be documented from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, the 'Universal Doctor' of the Church." Dr. Pieper has re-written for our time the orthodox Thomistic teachings on fortitude and temperance.

In so doing Dr. Pieper frequently refers to current liberalist notions. In contrast to classical theology modern misconceptions are shown to be feeble in themselves and enfeebling to man and society. At the same time we cannot help but see not only how Thomism has been neglected and misunderstood, but how "contemporaneous" Thomism really is.

Unfortunately, the title of this book may be somewhat forbidding to the laity: not necessarily because of lack of interest in those two cardinal virtues, but because many of us think "we have heard it all before." What

more is to be said than what we have memorized from the catechism, studied and re-studied from grade school through college, heard in numerous sermons? Assuming that we are not authorities in theology, this little book will make us realize that (in the words of the popular saying) "we don't know the half of it."

Dr. Pieper gives us the whole of it, concisely. While most practicing Christians merely know *about* fortitude and temperance, this book defines, clarifies, explains those two virtues with accuracy, precision, authority. Those who appreciate the "sheer beauty" of St. Thomas' thinking and his orderly presentation will be pleased by Dr. Pieper's writing too. The thought is perennial but the language is (in the best sense, and only insofar as the topic permits) modern.

*Fortitude and Temperance* is a book for Christians and non-Christians alike. It is especially recommended to the clergy and laity who read *Integrity*, for it certainly is a significant and timely contribution to "a Christian synthesis for our times."

BRENDAN O'GRADY

**RUSSIA BY THE BACK DOOR**  
by Leon Maks  
Sheed & Ward, \$3.50

The recent defections from the Soviet MVD bureaucracy of Petrov in Australia and Khokhlov in western Germany, both of

the generation that grew up under communism and both so personally successful within that system, has everyone wondering "What is life really like in Russia today?"

Leon Maks is in a unique position to give an answer. In 1939, before Russia entered the war, he was entrusted with the mission of trying to find the head of the Polish underground movement, who had been sent East during the mass deportations. With one companion, a good knowledge of Russian, and a small portable laboratory for faking documents, he covered thirteen thousand miles of Russia and Siberia. Wherever he went he shared the life of the Russian man in the street, or rather the Russian man on the collective farm, in the train station, in the concentration camp, etc. So successful was he at deception that he was later made head of a Russian military hospital containing two thousand patients, was promoted, decorated, spied on, promised the rank of general before he surreptitiously slipped back into the free West.

The interest of this book lies in the admirable and uncensored glimpses it gives of the Soviet peoples at work. A good many reports have been written recently about Moscow and the Soviet prison camps but most of these have been written from the outside, as it were, by foreigners in a closed community. This account takes us right into the midst of Soviet life. Mr. Maks is not inclined to moralize or comment. Indeed this account has the flavor of a travel book. It is an eye-witness report of the factual situation yet it is as exciting as any fictional thriller.

MARGARET A. HEIZMANN

PETER E. DIETZ, LABOR PRIEST  
by Mary Harrita Fox  
University of Notre Dame Press, \$4.75

This is the biography of a courageous and diligent priest who devoted his efforts to help better the conditions of

working men and women during the first quarter of this century. At a time when all too few clergymen stood up in defense of social justice, Father Peter Dietz was fearlessly speaking out concerning the deplorable plight of the American wage earner in our rapidly expanding industrial society. A man of extraordinary determination and conviction, he undertook to unify and organize Catholics in support of a comprehensive social program as enunciated in the famous social encyclical of Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. As a student Peter Dietz wrote that "we live in expectation of the day when the world will accept the solution of the Catholic doctrine, convinced that it contains a remedy for every social evil."

He was convinced that the social problem was basically the problem of labor and that it was necessary to have strong labor unions to protect the rights of the workers and awaken the employers to their duty. In taking this position Dietz was far ahead of most of his fellow priests, and his keen insight has since been proven correct. Philip Murray, the late C.I.O. President, paying tribute to Father Dietz said: "His was one of the clear voices of the Church for social justice through union organization. In this field he was a pioneer."

Dietz organized Catholic trade unionists into the Militia of Christ for Social Justice, the forerunner of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. He was responsible for the first Catholic labor college in America. He served as Social Service Commission Secretary for the American Federation of Catholic Societies, predecessor to the National Catholic Welfare Council. He worked closely with organized labor and was a friend of the leaders of the American Federation of Labor, whose conventions he attended regularly from 1909 until 1922. He used as his tools the pen, the speaker's stand, and private persuasion.

In 1922 at the age of 44 Father Dietz's career in the social movement came to a sudden and tragic close when Archbishop Moeller of Cincinnati, under pressure of employer groups, ordered him to close his labor school and leave the diocese. From that time on until his death in 1947 Dietz was pastor of a parish in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In this position he had the opportunity to put into practice his social philosophy. For example, he started the first parish credit union in the state of Wisconsin; he permitted no bingo games, bazaars, ticket peddling, pew rent or money collections at the door. His was a most unusual and Christian parish.

In evaluating the work of Father Dietz one must say that his role was that of the pioneer—many years ahead of the conservative American clergy. He realized that unless something was done the country would fall into the hands of either the industrialists or the socialists. He understood that a strong trade union movement would prevent the extremes of the far right and the far left—both of which would mean loss of freedom and dignity for the individual.

Dietz's position on certain issues seems to me to have been rather inconsistent with his belief in social reform. For example, I find it hard to understand how he could write in 1936 that he was alarmed at the "accelerated pace" with which the A. F. of L. was moving to the left. The people who controlled the Federation at that time could hardly be called "left-wingers"—or even liberals for that matter. He was opposed to industrial unionism on the grounds that it wouldn't work out. This theory was proven false by the almost miraculous growth of the C.I.O. in the thirties which offered the unskilled workers in the basic industries a chance to stand on their own feet with their own union. In this respect Dietz was in serious error. I also had trouble understanding his opposition to the League of Nations and his support of a man like President Warren Harding who didn't have a progressive bone in his body. These criticisms of Dietz, however, do not detract from the fact that he was a noble and fearless man who through his unselfish love of mankind did indeed contribute to improving our society.

JOHN FLYNN

THE FORMATION OF A LAY APOSTLE  
by Francis N. Wendell, O.P.  
The Torch, 141 East 65th St., N. Y. 21, N. Y.  
Paper, 50c; Cloth, \$1.25

Father Wendell has written a treatise much like himself, for those who know him: natural, supernatural,

informal, to the point. In this little work (only 100 pages, including a bibliography) it is the author's intention to present the "ABC's" of the Lay Apostolate, especially as it is taking shape here in America. Actually this is the second edition of a work which appeared some years ago. In the light of all that has been learned about the lay apostolate in this country during the last ten years, a revised, up-to-date edition is certainly called for.

I would say that the book is essentially characterized by its balance and prudence—two wonderful qualities in a field where, to be plain, it is so easy to become—and where there are so many—crack-pots.

The icing on the cake is this: "balance and prudence" need not be here translated as "compromise and soft-soap." It is evident that the author believes sanctity itself to be in "the normal way" of the Christian soul. Only he doesn't kid himself about its being the usual thing. It is very normal for a lay Christian to become filled with the love of God; but it is exceedingly unusual when he does so. It is comforting to be encouraged onward to mental prayer and contemplation by a priest who obviously knows how easily you can fall into mortal sin.

The first chapter is devoted to a general discussion of the lay vocation, and the other chapters to special problems of that vocation—e.g. time and rule of life, spiritual direction, prayer, etc. There's a paragraph in the first chapter I want to quote; it gives a good idea of what I mean by the "balance and prudence" of this book: "The lay apostle has a double function to accomplish. The first, like that of every other human being,

is his own sanctification. The second is his, what we might call, external mission, which is the sanctification and the salvation of his fellowman.... Both functions are vital.... It still is true that no one can give what he does not have, and that the one who attempts to be an instrument in the sanctification of others while neglecting himself is an enigma, and sometimes somewhat of a pest.... The God of good works must never be deserted for the good works of God. 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?'

"Above all, then, the lay apostle must be a man with an interior life. This does not imply sanctity before he can enter the arena . . . the very external work of the apostolate itself can be and should be one of the means of the lay apostle's sanctification."

It sometimes impresses me—but this is true of literature on the subject in general, and not only of this book—that the term "lay apostle" is a bit grandiose. What is it that a "lay apostle" does that a baptized Catholic, a Christian, is not obliged to do? If a Christian does not have a vocation to further the kingdom of Christ, what does he have? Finally, it struck me that the book so often speaks of the lay apostle and *her* relationship to *her* family, *her* leisure, *her* job, *her* etc. Although I am a convert, I have been in the Church long enough to realize that, de facto, the female of the species is more active in the lay apostolate. But if the books on the subject continue to address themselves to the fair sex, they are certainly not going to hurry along the process of interesting Catholic manhood. A small gripe about a good book.

It is common talk among priests and religious that, in the twentieth century, God is pouring some of His choicest graces into the souls of laymen. As in the first days of the Church, it is becoming evident that there is really no such thing as an "ordinary Christian." (As if there could be anything ordinary about being a son of the Living God!) Why these unusual graces, no one can say. I heard one well-known American bishop speculate frankly that it was because we were probably in the last great epoch of history. In any case, a grace is always both an opportunity and a responsibility. A book like this is an honest help in taking advantage of our new spiritual opportunities, and in living up to our deepening Christian responsibilities.

MICHAEL DAVID

THE CROSS AND THE CHRISTIAN  
by Pius-Raymond Régamey, O.P.  
Herder, \$3.25

The age-old, ever-agonizing problem of suffering presents itself in strange and terrifying guises to this generation,

racked with war, without faith or hope, and with fear and stark horror driving humanity toward desperate solutions—or, beyond solutions, to despair. It is idle to speculate as to whether man is plumbing the lowest depths of his passion in these days, but one thing is certain, as Père Régamey says, "Grace alone can enable us to bear it."

There is a compelling urgency that the Christian answer to suffering, which is the Cross of Christ, be shown to the millions engulfed by pain—and demonstrated by one who is not only a theologian but a man with the Christian courage to bear his share of the Cross, and the gentleness and compassion to comfort his fellow-sufferers coupled with the intellectual and spiritual insight which makes this book possible and convincing. God has given Père Régamey grace to write a very moving and remarkable book, of the utmost importance to Christians today, and the authenticity and consolation of this work lie precisely in the fact that his thesis has borne triumphantly the test of reality in our time. The Passion of Christ takes on new meaning as it is interpreted for us by one who has been privileged and willing to share in it with thousands of his fellows.

"I am hurrying," says the author, "I want to answer calls for help. I want to throw the bottle into the sea, for, like so many, I am in danger of being swallowed up tomorrow."

Père Régamey has indeed answered calls for help here, and there is nothing theoretical in his evaluation of suffering which, as he says, is in itself a scandal, and Christians must admit this before they can begin to speak of its redemptive role through grace. In fact, he says "suffering in its very nature is even more scandalous for Christ and the Christian than for the wretched man who has no hope." For, in his demand for happiness, "he remains in the realm of phenomena, whereas the Christian demands absolute happiness." There is little that Père Régamey does not know about the odious realities of suffering, and his chapter "From Suffering to the Cross" should be read, not quoted, in order to appreciate it fully.

From the cross in human terms the author proceeds to the Cross of Christ, and here, in exact theological terms, enlightened by experience, is the vindication of and solution to the whole problem of suffering—its transformation into sacrifice through the length, the height, the depth and the breadth of the Cross of the Saviour, willingly accepted for us through the mystery which is Love. The book moves through discussion of the Christian's ability and privilege to share in the Passion of our Blessed Lord to the supreme point of this Passion, the sense of abandonment by God, called by the author "the silence of God." We, too, are permitted to ponder the cruelty and power of evil in our lives and the nations, to wonder, in times of distress, why God does not rescue us, provided we do not corrupt our questionings with doubt. We answer the silence of God with our own silence of heart, in which we may hear the still, small voice of Love. "If we live," says Père Régamey, "strengthened in faith, a mysterious stripping will take place . . . that can well be called silence. . . . The soul suffers from God's silence, because its life is wholly dependent upon Him, yet it needs no answer. In this perfectly chaste silence, will not God make Himself heard?"

The author's intention, he tells us, is to write two longer works, of which this will form the nucleus, one on the Cross of Christ and the Cross of the Christian, the other on The Silence of God. JANET KNIGHT

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